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ABSTRACT

The document briefly outlines the events leading to mainstreaming of handicapped children and presents guidelines for administrators and teachers involved in implementing mainstream programs. Among suggestions given are the following: the decision to mainstream should be accompanied by a decision to provide a comprehensive instructional support system for the children involved and for their teachers; no mainstreaming effort should be attempted without attention to inservice education; a good working relationship among all staff members involved needs to be established to facilitate mainstreaming; the individual special student under consideration for mainstreaming should be able to successfully compete with his peers in the regular school program for the particular subject, activity, or time period specified; and the mainstreaming process should be a gradual one. Also included is a systematic step-by-step procedure for implementing mainstreaming. (SBH)

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MAINSTREAMING

SPECIAL EDUCATION IS A PART OF, NOT A PART FROM, REGULAR EDUCATION

BACKGROUND & GUIDELINES

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1978

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WHY - RATIONALE

Several forces have combined to support a movement toward the provisions of educational services within the regular classroom to all but the most severely handicapped children.

Research, litigation (court decisions), state and federal legislation have laid the groundwork for a legal responsibility on the part of the school system to provide a free and appropriate public education in the "least restrictive environment" for all handicapped children.

Research projects investigating the merits of special class vs. regular class placements date back to 1932 (Bennet). Since that time many studies have been conducted.

Dunn's (1968) forceful critique of special classes for the retarded appears to have provided the direction for future programs.

Litigation that has had an effect on special education has been related to . . . minority testing and placement . . . Hobson vs. Hanson (1967), Arrelola vs. Board of Education (1968), Diana vs. State Board of Education (1970) . . . due process in selection and admission procedures . . . Brown vs. Board of Education (1954), Esteban vs. Central Mississippi School District (1967), Mills vs. Board of Education (1972) . . . suspension and expulsion of exceptional children . . . Tinker vs. Des Moines Independent School District, Calloway vs. Briggs (1971), Mills vs. Board of Education (1972) . . . and exceptional children's right to an appropriate education . . . Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Children vs. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (1971).

More recently, on August 3, 1973, Govenor Lucey signed into law, Chapter 89, currently Wisconsin Statutes Chapter 115.89,and on November 29, 1975, President Ford signed into law the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (Public Law 94-142). That which has been theory and good educational practices for a number of years is now public law.

WHAT

Mainstreaming means many things to many people, depending on their point of reference. To illustrate this point,a recent review of the literature revealed nine slightly different definitions.

> Mainstreaming is the SELECTIVE integration of Exceptional Education Needs (EEN) students into the regular school program (least restrictive environment) in order to maximize their intellectual, social, and physical development.

The Least Restrictive Environment should be synonymous with Most Productive Environment.

HOW

SUGGESTIONS FOR ADMINISTRATORS AND TEACHERS

The mainstreaming concept and process can be facilitated by administrators. Gradation and placement of all students is an administrative responsibility. In most school districts this responsibility is delegated to building principals. Principals are viewed as the chief field representative of the mainstreaming concept. Without principals in that role on a continuing basis, mainstreaming could be expected to have a difficult time. Therefore, it is necessary for all elementary, junior, and senior high school principals to thoroughly understand the mainstreaming process, step by step.

The decision to mainstream is an administrative responsibility of the district administrator, director of special education or building principal.

The recommendation to mainstream is a supportive staff responsibility, i.e. EEN teacher, program supervisor, multidisciplinary team.

The mainstreaming programs which are in operation vary considerably regarding the administrative organization and services provided. The following suggestions are offered by Chaffin (1974, pp. 17) to administrators who may be considering the initiation or expansion of a mainstreaming program:

1) The decision to mainstream should be accompanied by a decision to provide a comprehensive instructional support system for the children involved and for their teachers.

2) Not all handicapped children will benefit from mainstreaming. Selection of the children to be involved should be done carefully and should be based on the recommendations of persons thoroughly familiar with the social, emotional, and educational needs of a specific student.

3) Mainstreaming plans should be developed at the school building level. Many school buildings are substantially different in terms of the administrative style of the principal, the attitude of the teachers, and the student population in the building. Thus, different approaches to mainstreaming may be necessary depending on the particular climate in the building.

4) Participatory planning may be the most important element in mainstreaming efforts. All personnel (regular and special) who will be involved with handicapped children should be allowed to participate in the planning of the program.

5) omitted

6) No mainstreaming effort should be attempted without serious attention given to providing inservice education. A systematic inservice education program will be needed by both special and regular personnel.

7) The procedures for providing instructional support in each building should be carefully delineated. A detailed description of the kinds of support services provided in the building should also be developed. This practice not only enhances communication among the staff in a building but also provides a basis for a student monitoring (accounting) system.

8) Develop a student monitoring (accounting) system as part of the mainstreaming plan. This monitoring system should provide minimal information concerning the students progress (academic and social).

9) Obtain data related to student progress and other important variables such as teachers' attitudes toward the program.

10) Report the results obtained from the program to administrators, teachers, parents, and community. Even poor results can improve morale if proper steps are being taken to remedy problem areas.

SUGGESTIONS FOR ADMINISTRATORS AND TEACHERS

One of the most important objectives of a special education program for mildly handicapped children is to return its pupils to the regular school program as soon as appropriate. In other words, special class placement is only a TEMPORARY intervention. In a sense, children in such classes are being prepared for mainstreaming into the regular education program from the very moment of their entry into the special classroom.

If one accepts the position that behavior, both academic and social, is learned, then one may expect that many mildly handicapped youngsters will be able to return to a regular classroom when they have acquired and maintained acceptable behavior, academic and social patterns.

Ideally the mainstreaming process should be a gradual one. Reentry into a regular education program should be one class at a time. With a minimum time of 10 school days between the addition of each class. Class additions should be made only if and when the student is being successful. Longer periods of time between adding classes may be necessary depending on each student's progress (adjustment).

If the student is not making adjustment in a regular class, the regular education teacher and special education teacher should work cooperatively together and try to find a solution to the situation. Withdrawing the EEN student from the regular class should occur only if the situation cannot be solved in the regular classroom. The EEN student should only be withdrawn for the period(s) that the problem occurs at the time of withdrawal. The special education teacher should design a plan to solve the problem and prepare the EEN student for reentry.

Continuous monitoring of the students progress is a necessity. The student will tell you through his behavior when to move from step to step.

Successful mainstreaming requires cooperation and communication among a variety of professionals; teacher, principal, psychologist, social worker, guidance counselor, and parents.

SUGGESTIONS FOR TEACHERS

In order for successful mainstreaming to take place, generalization must occur. Generalization is defined by Sulzer and Mayer (1972) in Harold Thorpe - unpublished paper as "A process through which a behavior learned strengthened in one stimulus situation tends to occur in other stimulus situations". In plain English, a student must learn a behavior in the special classroom in order for that behavior to occur in the regular classroom.

Each teacher has slightly different expectations. The special education teacher must be acutely aware of the behaviors expected and experiences encountered in the specific regular class environment receving the child. The special education teacher should carefully analyze and rank according to importance these expectations. The child must be given the opportunity to learn the behavior patterns required (prerequisite skills) prior to mainstreaming. The following suggestions are offered:

Replicate regular classroom components (conditions) within special classroom prior to mainstreaming i.e.

a) less teacher attention

b) use traditional reinforcement, i.e. grades, teacher helper, etc.

c) more independent work

d) delay in feedback, i.e. corrected papers given back next day

e) delay answering hand raise

f) give directions only once

g) teach in- seat behavior

h) teach hand raising behavior

i) name in upper right hand corner

j) on or above skill level of regular class (same textbooks, materials)

k) consistent academic performance (speed and accuracy) (task completion)

l) work in close proximity of other students i.e. elbow to elbow, desks in rows

m) withdraw study carrels, room dividers, etc.

n) use dictionary skills, i.e. alphabetizing, index

o) hall behavior

EEN students may require some assistance to bridge the gap as they enter the new setting.

1) Peer Tutor: it might be feasible to enlist the help of a peer who can play the role of helper and friend. Perhaps someone with whom the EEN student has established a desirable relationship prior to mainstreaming; a playmate, a neighbor etc. The peer tutor can help the EEN student become familiar with other children in the room, get acquainted with classroom rules and procedures, and give academic assistance when the regular teacher is too busy. High status students have proven to be effective peer tutors.

2) Introductory Conference: a meeting with the special teacher, regular teacher, EEN student, and parent if appropriate to go over the ground rules and expectations prior to mainstreaming.

3) Parallel Instruction: the special teacher must be aware of materials and procedures used in the regular classroom and use them in special class setting to get the EEN student on or above level of regular class prior to mainstreaming attempt.

If an EEN student still requires reinforcement, the special teacher has several alternatives available that might be feasible depending on the circumstances.

1) request the regular teacher to provide

2) assist the EEN student to make the transfer to traditional reinforcement i.e. grades, first in line, teacher helper, facial expressions, gestures etc.

3) delay reinforcement until EEN student returns to special room

4) teach EEN student a self-reinforcement (self-monitoring) technique i.e. self-timing, self-correcting, self-marking, etc.

Since many special education classrooms employ highly individualized instructional programs, the special teacher should gradually transfer the student to small or large group instructional programs and techniques prior to mainstreaming if possible.

Gradually withdraw special teacher support and encourage independent work. By mainstreaming time, the EEN student should be able to work relatively independently with minimal teacher support.

Locate EEN student near door in regular classroom so that he can enter and leave without disrupting the class.

Perhaps the most important variable in mainstreaming is the relationship between the special and regular teacher. Ideally mainstreaming will be facilitated if a good working relationship (partners) exists among all involved staff members. The burden falls on the special education teacher to develop and maintain cooperation and communication. One way of developing a good working relationship is to share appropriate and relevant information and data, discuss alternatives, and then mutually select an alternative.

Another way to gain acceptance and establish a working relationship is for the special teachers to do their fair share of extra curricular activities i.e. recess duty, bus duty, coaching sports or drama, stage manager, etc.; sometimes volunteering for extra jobs that nobody likes to do - group control, clean up, etc.

Inform regular teachers of what to expect when a child is to be returned to their classroom. The EEN student should be expected to be like everyone else, given each individuals uniqueness. EEN students should be able to successfully compete in regular classroom with little, if any, adaptation.

EEN teachers have a responsibility to assist and provide support to the regular teacher, EEN student, parent, etc. throughout the mainstreaming process. This can be facilitated by (1) having on-going contact, daily, weekly conferences, and/or checklist (2) establish mutual goals and mutual evaluations of same (3) providing materials and equipment, etc.

Regular class teachers' attitudes are as significant as their teaching skills in implementing mainstreaming. They have neither the formal training nor the experience in dealing with EEN children. They will need a tremendous amount of support from special teachers, principals, psychologists, social workers, and guidance counselors in order to meet the needs of mainstreamed children.

Regular teachers will need to be prepared to accept the mainstreaming of mildly handicapped youngsters.

It is natural that most classroom teachers respond to the prospect of mainstreaming with mixed emotions; anxiety and curiosity as well as hope for success. These are normal expressions of concern when children who make new kinds of demands and require different approaches are placed in the regular classroom. But with supportive assistance from trained special education personnel, principals, psychologists, social workers, guidance counselors and inservice programs, the transition can be made with ease and become an extremely positive experience.

RULES OF THUMB: GUIDELINES

The individual EEN student under consideration for mainstreaming should be able to successfully compete with his peers in the regular school program for the particular subject, activity, or time period specified.

After careful assessment of the following factors: intelligence, age, physical, emotional, social, academic, environmental, health and experience; you conclude that the answer to the following two questions is positive (1) Can the student do the work? (2) Will the student do the work?, then proceed with the pre-mainstreaming planning. In order to answer these two questions it may be necessary to review the suggestions for preparing a student for mainstreaming on page 4 of this manual.

The following four rules should be applied tc each individual case prior to recommendations as to where to mainstream and again prior to the decision to mainstream:

	RULE	EXCEPTION
1.	Within 1 year of chronological age.	within 2 years of C.A.
2.	1 peer group.	several peer groups
3.	No more than 2 mainstreamed EEN students in same regular class at the same time.	3 or more mainstreamed EEN students in same regular class at the same time.
4.	Recess - lunch according to mainstream assignment with peer group.	other

ALL EXCEPTIONS ARE TO BE JUSTIFIED IN WRITING.

EEN teacher, supportive personnel, or multidisciplinary team should submit recommended mainstreaming plan to the building principal in writing. Building principal should review and analyze recommendations in accordance with rules of thumb prior to making the decision to mainstream.

SYSTEMATIC MAINSTREAMING PROCEDURE

STEP BY STEP

1) Pre-mainstreaming: determine readiness

   a) academic behaviors (specific performance)
   b) study time behaviors (specific performance)
   c) social behaviors (specific performance)

   Gather data now which will allow pre and post mainstreaming data comparison (evaluation of the success of behavior maintenance in the new setting).

2) Pre-mainstreaming: develop plan

   The special education teacher should develop a list of preferred subjects or activities and gradual timeline into which the child could be mainstreamed.

   This plan should be in writing as a recommendation to principal, M-team, special education director/supervisor.

3) Pre-mainstreaming: preparing for the change

   a) experience chart listing

      1) names of some of the students
      2) teacher, secretary, custodian, principal, etc.

   b) meeting the regular school personnel
   c) conference on ground rules
   d) follow additional procedures employed for enrolment of new student
   e) determine specific day and time - recommend middle or end of week to reduce anxiety. (Beginning or quarters or semesters.)

4) Mainstreaming: Managing Initial Placement

   Special teacher should meet regular teacher at the end of the initial day to learn the regular teachers' assessment of the actual adjustment.

5) Post-mainstreaming: Assess Behavior Maintenance (4 to 6 weeks)

   a) academic behavior (specific performance)
   b) study time behavior (specific performance)
   c) social behavior (specific performance)

   Gather post data for comparison with pre data which will allow an adjustment evaluation.

6) Post-mainstreaming: Communication

   Maintain a communication link with regular teacher, EEN student, parent, other staff in regard to child's progress.

   a) checklist
   b) conferences - record high points
   c) combination of a & b

   Continuous measurement of behavior can help the teacher detect minor deviation from the norm and quickly arrange the slight remediation solution needed.

I am sure that I have not exhausted all the possible ideas, suggestions, alternatives and options.

Your input would be appreciated. Please send yourideas to:

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For those readers who would like to know more about the WHY and WHAT of mainstreaming I suggest the following materials as a starting point:

MAINSTREAMING - A Selected and Annotated Bibliography

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
"Bureau" Memorandum
Volume XVII, Number 4
Summer 1976

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WORD OF CAUTION:

Any similiarities between the above gentlemen's point of view and this paper is purely coincidental.

FILM

Today's Date ___/___/___

CLASSROOM REINTEGRATION FORM
BEHAVIOR/ACADEMIC ACCOUNTABILITY

NAME OF STUDENT: _____

Please check and complete the necessary data for the above students. This procedure will help to reintegrate the student by requiring him to be accountable for his academic and social behavior in your class. Please rate on a 0-3 rating scale with 3 being the highest rating, or excellence.

ASSIGNMENT REQUIRED:	Out of Classroom Behavior	Social Behavior	Achievement Behavior
	___ 3	___ 3	___ 3
	___ 2	___ 2	___ 2
DUE DATE: ___/___/___	___ 1	___ 1	___ 1
	___ 0	___ 0	___ 0

COMMENTS:

TEACHER'S SIGNATURE _____